

STONE CHURCH NEWS

JULY 2020



From the Pastor's Desk

Ben and I have a rule - we must get one another's permission before we tell a story about the other in a sermon or newsletter article. And there are often layers to the permission being given - particular ways that the story must be told - usually to protect the innocent. Ben loves to tell a story about me getting in trouble for talking during church as a child. But he likes to exaggerate how many times I had to be punished before learning my lesson, so there are often negotiations on how this one gets told. Telling our history through storytelling has always meant that there is a slant to how events are related and interpreted. This also means there is a slant to the lessons we learn - or don't learn from the stories we tell. Knowing this is empowering.

The Biblical storytellers were no different. The slant is always toward the people of Israel. Even in the places where there is radical inclusion for all people or a flipping of who is on the outside and who is on the inside, Israel is central to God's unfolding story in the Bible. God's promise to Abraham in Genesis is that Abraham will be the father of a great nation and that nation will be blessed so that it can be a blessing. And yet, the Biblical writers do not give us perfect heroes. They may write with slant, but they do not shy away from the flawed nature of the people of God.

In July, we are beginning a worship series called, *Family Trees*, that will look at these very imperfect humans with whom God has chosen to partner and bless. Abraham, Sarah, and the generations that follow will make choices that hurt each other, that are selfish, and that impact entire nations of people. They will also learn and show grace. They will grow. From these people and stories, the nation of Israel grows. These are the tales that shape it and root it, that give it - and us - direction even now.

It can be difficult to look back on these complicated and painful stories with clear eyes - to not shy away from the intricate layers in the events. It can also be really helpful. In July, on Independence Day, we also look back on the beginning of our nation - the United States. It is a history told with slant. Now more than ever, we need to look at the stories we tell with clear eyes - acknowledging intricate layers and flawed "heroes" - so that we can help shape the unfolding of who we are into a people who do not settle for an unjust society, who are unafraid to disrupt the status quo for the cause of peace, who are compelled by faithfulness and love rather than power, greed, or prestige.

Maya Angelou said, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." I believe we can do better. I believe we can keep learning - there is so much more to know. And I think wrestling honestly with these stories, with our roots, with the slant of history can help. I look forward to humbly and vulnerably walking alongside you as we continue to learn - show grace - and grow.

Stone Church Leadership Team Meeting

“Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.”



Is it worth the risk? A hard question at the best of times, and now even harder than ever. In chemistry, we use a process called risk assessment. This includes evaluating both the probability of a negative event occurring and also the magnitude of the impacts. For example, how likely is it that someone will be exposed to a chemical and how toxic is the chemical? In the end, though, there has to be a value judgement – is it worth the risk? The Leadership Team and COVID-19 Response Team are going through a similar process as we try to discern our path forward.

I thought, when we first created the COVID-19 Response Team, that this would be a fairly easy task. See what others are doing, look to the CDC for protocols, no problem. I could not have been more wrong. Our decisions are impacting your physical, mental, and emotional health, and I and the rest of the committee feel the tremendous weight of that responsibility.

The Leadership Team and the Response Team both feel very strongly our responsibility to protect the physical health of members of our church family, including the congregation, pastors, staff, and especially the most vulnerable in our community. We have chosen to move conservatively because of our deep love for each of you. However, we also understand the importance of mental health and the desire to be with one another. To make the best possible decisions we read CDC recommendations, recent studies, and guidelines from our own District Executive and other denominations.

With all this information in mind, at each meeting we ask: what are the most important needs and ministries? How are those being met without physically meeting? How would meeting physically change the ministry? Is it worth the risk?

You've hopefully already seen our update on the Friday Flash – the first phase of opening (Mt. Sinai phase) will begin on July 10th only if Huntingdon County is in the green phase and there have been less than 10 cases in the previous two weeks. The Mt. Sinai phase still only allows small groups to gather in the sanctuary if there is a compelling reason, for example, for a wedding or memorial service.

You may be wondering – why wait a month? There are two main reasons. First, we want to see the impacts of reduced restrictions on the number of cases. Will cases go up or remain steady in the county? Secondly, there is a lot to prepare. Protocols need to be written that cover everything from distancing and masks to frequency of cleaning. Cleaning and sanitizing supplies need to be purchased. The HVAC and water will need to be run before the first use because of risk of mold and Legionnaires disease. This month will give us time to get ready.

You may also be wondering why this first phase is still so restrictive. After all, some congregations are actually back to meeting in their church. We have chosen not to take this step in part because of the additional risk, and in part because we would not be coming back to the type of service we know and love even if we are in the sanctuary. Pews would be roped off to keep family units at least 6 feet apart. Everyone would be wearing masks and there would be no singing. There would be no hugs, no handshakes, and no passing the offering plate. The pews would be stripped of hymnals, welcome pads, and anything else that could pass along germs. There would be a clear pathway laid out for travel to a pew, and we would be dismissed slowly at the end of the service so we would not get too close

together. No lingering in the aisles and chatting or greeting the pastor on the way out. Those who are high risk (over 60 or immunocompromised) would be encouraged to stay home. For the present, we can be closer in many ways over Zoom than we can be in the same building. So we have decided that, for now, no – it is not worth the risk.

It's easy to forget that COVID-19 is extremely contagious, has the potential to be deadly, and that it takes some infected individuals months to recover with lingering side effects. And although we can identify those most at risk, all of us, at any age and any health are at risk. When it comes time to make these decisions I sometimes picture those who were often in pews near me. Bill Peters. Jerri and Dean Wenger. The energetic and so often smiling Everett, Cyrus and Ezra. Am I willing to risk their health, their lives, for the benefit of being in our building?

And so we will continue to move slowly and cautiously, and connect electronically instead of physically. The journey to the Promised Land will be slow (although hopefully not forty years...☺). Please – stay patient, stay safe, and keep reaching out (virtually) to give or receive help from those around you.

Submitted by Sharon Yohn
Leadership Team vice-chair and
COVID-19 Response Team chair

Where to get trusted information about COVID-19

Cases in Pennsylvania:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

Cases broken down by county and zip code:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Cases.aspx>

Middle District Church of the Brethren District Executive updates – see “Middle PA District News” on the right, and look for the latest “DE Check-in”

<https://sites.google.com/site/midpacob/home>

CDC COVID-19 information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

CDC recommendations for faith based organizations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

From our Finance Team...

We feel blessed to be able to report on the continued financial support of the Stone Church mission, despite the challenges associated with COVID-19. Through the end of May 2020, giving totaled \$121,625 (which is about 42% of the annual budget for giving). Expenses for the year so far are at \$114,364 (or about 40% of the annual budget for expenses). Five months represents 42% of the year, so we are on track with our budget.



Our congregation approved a balanced budget for 2020; but to do that called for us to make some challenging reductions, particularly in the area of Witness. Our hope is that giving will exceed the budget and enable us to restore some or all of the Witness outreach; as this aspect of our shared mission is something we all value.

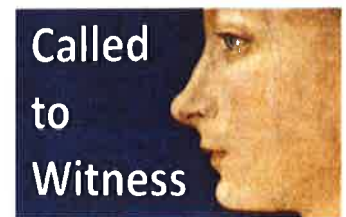
Thank you for your continued support. If you have questions please be in touch with any member of the Finance Team.

Peacefully, Simply and Together

Bob McMinn, Daisy Decker, Jeff Cloz, John Wright and Jamie White

Stone Church Responds to Community Needs

Members of the Stone Church responded with speedy generosity this past month to the special needs of our Huntingdon community caused by the one-two punch of, first the loss of employment from the COVID 19 pandemic, and then by the devastating fire that took the historic Blair Building.



Responding to a “5 for Food” appeal from the Witness Team, members contributed \$4375.00 dollars to purchase 75 grocery cards for the Huntingdon Area Food Bank. The cards will be used to help restock the shelves of the food bank and will go to several families that have been hit especially hard by layoffs caused by the virus. In a note of thanks to Stone Church, Jean Feagley, the food bank coordinator, said that she had “three or four families” that would be greatly helped by the “extra food supplies.”

Because the cards were purchased through the grocery card program, shepherded by Barb Purdy and Cheryl Ritchey, a contribution of more than \$200.00 will come to Stone Church from the Weiss and Giant markets.

The food bank will also use some of the grocery cards to help families made homeless as a result of the Blair Building fire. In addition, Stone Church has sent \$3,576.00 to the Salvation Army which, according to Captain Charity Bender, will be a great help in assisting families in replacing lost items and dealing with the expense of temporary housing. Nearly one fifth of the funds raised by the Salvation Army, for fire victims, came from Stone Church.

Counting some funds that have not yet been disbursed, Stone Church has raised \$8,721.00 in recent weeks to provide relief for members of our community that have endured special hardships. The Witness Team sends you a heartfelt, warm “Thank You.”

Dale Wampler, Martha Swigart, Sandy Loughlin, Uma Ramakrishnan, Mark Meckstroth, Sophia Gingrich, and Cindy Lattimer

Denominational Worship Gathering "New World Coming!"

July 1, 2020

8:00 pm

Photo by Glenn Riegel

On July 1, 2020, a **Denominational Worship Gathering** will take place virtually at 8:00 pm EDT. It will center around the theme: "New World Coming!"

The service will feature voices from across the denomination, with a wide array of music including the denominational virtual choir.

In a season of disruption and despair, the service will point to the God in Christ who makes a way where there seems to be no way (Isaiah 43:19) -- encouraging us to build new worlds in God's name (Luke 4:18-19) -- seeing with eyes of faith, the vision of the Lamb (2 Corth. 5:7) -- as a weary earth sings -- nevertheless -- a New Song of New Creation, in Jesus (2 Corth. 5:17; Rev. 21:1-8)!

A worship bulletin will be available by June 24th at www.brethren.org/ac/virtual



Children of All Ages, Welcome to Worship!

July 1, 2020

7:30 pm



Join us for a 25-minute children's worship experience (**immediately preceding the denominational worship service**) on Wednesday, July 1 at 7:30pm EDT.

You'll meet Louise Boid, a colorfully opinionated bird from Brooklyn as she moves to central Pennsylvania to get away from those noisy New York City ducks and pigeons! And you'll experience storyteller, Linda Himes, sharing the message of God's love for each of God's children! Carol Hipps Elmore will lead us in songs throughout to keep you singing and moving.

Both worship times are planned and sponsored by the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee.

Photo by Keith Hollenberg

Church of the Brethren Online Concert

July 2, 2020

8:00 pm

Photo by Glenn Riegel



An hour-long on-line music celebration featuring Church of the Brethren musicians that the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee has secured, providing a variety of musical styles and instruments from across the church.

Contributors include Brethren singer/songwriters Joseph Helfrich, Michael Stern, Shawn Kirchner, Seth Hendricks, **Terry and Andy Murray**, Jacob Crouse and the Bittersweet Gospel Band. Selections are also scheduled from the Miami First Church of the Brethren, and the women's choir from EYN Mubi. Long-time Church of the Brethren friend, Ken Medema, has written and recorded a song just for this event!

The concert is hosted by Program and Arrangements Committee members Emily Shonk Edwards and Carol Elmore. Join us for this cross section of inspirational music from around the church, as part of the 2 day activities in lieu of an actual in-person Annual Conference gathering.

News From CAMP

Brethren Open Golf Tournament – August 11

Bring your friends and enjoy a great day of golf while helping to raise funds for Middle PA District ministry training and CBD Summer Camp. Sign-in at Iron Masters Country Club is from 11:30am – 12:30pm for a 1:00pm start. Cost is \$80 per golfer, which includes 18 holes, cart, a meal, and lots of prizes! *Registration deadline is August 3. For more info, visit www.campbluediamond.org or call Camp at 814-667-2355.*

Family Camp – August 7-9 and 21-23

While the traditional summer camp schedule has been put on hold, Family Camp is still on! And in order to keep campers safe and make this opportunity available to more families, CBD has added a second weekend of Family Camp as well. Enjoy a special opportunity for families of all types to reconnect while being in a Christ-centered community, surrounded by God's glorious creation. Family units will be lodged in the summer camp cabins, Main Lodge and Ouch House. Meals will be in the Main Lodge Dining Hall. Most activities will be done as families, with some separate programming available for adults, youth and children. Family Camp begins Friday evening at 7 p.m. and ends Sunday after morning worship. Cost is \$78 per person ages 12 and older; \$57 per children 3-11. *For more info, visit www.campbluediamond.org or call Camp at 814-667-2355.*

Upcoming Events

Family Camp	August 7-9 & 21-23
Brethren Open Golf Tournament	August 11
Virtual Heritage Fair	September 19
Quilt & Craft Camp	October 16-18

Have questions?

Contact your Camp Representative, David Meadows, at 814-599-6017 or meadowd@juniata.edu.



Gene's Jottings

"Our 244th Year"



Some quotes for your reflection this Independence Day... — Gene

"When the people fear the government, we have tyranny. When the government fears the people, you have liberty" — President Thomas Jefferson

"Where liberty dwells. There is my county" — Benjamin Franklin

"Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freedom of speech" — Benjamin Franklin

"We hold... that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth!" — President Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg

"Who can say where the road goes, where the day flows; only time. And who can say if your love grows as your heart chose; only time.

Who can say why your heart signs as your love flies; only time. And who can say why your heart cries, when your love lies; only time." — Roma Ryan

"Turn! Turn! Turn!

To everything there is a season. And a time to every purpose under heaven.

A time to be born, a time to die. A time to plant, a time to reap.

A time to kill, and a time to heal. A time to laugh, a time to weep.

To everything (Turn! Turn! Turn!)

There is a season (Turn! Turn! Turn!). And a time to every purpose under heaven.

A time to build up, a time to break down.

A time to dance, a time to mourn. A time to cast away stones. A time to gather stones.

A time to gain, a time to lose. A time to rend, a time to sew.

A time for love. A time for hate. A time for peace, I swear it's not too late." — Folk Song,
based on Ecclesiastes 3

"Why me, Lord. Lord help me, Jesus, I've wasted it so. Help me Jesus; I know what I am. But now that I know that I've needed you so... Help me Jesus, my soul's in your hand. Jesus, my soul's in your hand." — Kris Kristofferson

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in our bloodstream." — President Ronald Reagan

—"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our god?" — Micah 6:8

—Eugene Goshorn—

"With us in spirit..."

Below are members of our church family who, though they are not often physically able to join us in worship, remain with us in spirit. Remember them in your prayers, and with cards and visits! Please contact the church office (814-643-3390 or stonechurch@verizon.net) to add others you know.

DeLois Fluke
11325 Raystown Rd.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Jean Prendergast
Arista Care, Room 173
1229 Warm Springs Ave
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Thelma Wallace
5754 Wallace Dr.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

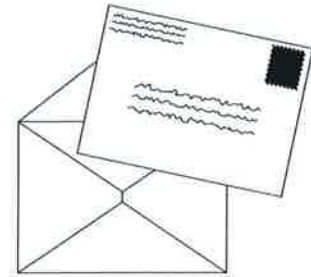
Gene & Alberta Goshorn
14155 Hill Valley Rd.
Mt. Union PA 17066

Lydia Price
c/o Charla and Greg Chiapelli
597 Sechler Rd.
Somerset, Pa 15501

John Keiper
PO Box 121
Bedford, PA 15522
jdkjak@gmail.com

Westminster Woods

John Bowser
Sue & Bill Martin (@the Oaks)
Yvonne McKenzie (@the Oaks)
Denny Rock



Men's Breakfast

July 18th . - 8:05 AM

TBD whether Zoom or at Donna's Family Restaurant
Bring your own favorite breakfast dish and join other Stone Church men and boys for fellowship, jokes and a light reflection. Send your email address to Rick Laabs (laabsra55@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending and he will send you a Zoom invitation.

Watch for details in the Friday Flash.

Mid-Week Bible Study – WEDNESDAY nights @ 7pm*

(*except on the 1st week of July, when we will meet on Tuesday, July 7th, instead!)



Join us as we take a deeper dive into the scripture.

See the **Friday Flash** for details on how to join us on Zoom via computer or phone. Unable to make it, but still want to listen in? Please contact the office for an audio recording.

July Birthdays

4—Sandy Brechbiel	14—Danny Uhrich	22—Dave Witkovsky
5—Fiona Phillippe-Grugan	15—Louise Smith	24—Austin Pheasant
7—Joe Krabill	16—Bill Fagan	24—Belle Tuten
9—Anne Brockett	16—Carol Swigart	24—Kieran Wright
10—Ron Detwiler	19—Sarah Strunk	26—Bob McMinn
13—Ben Lattimer	21—Carol Fultz	31—Livi Hall *1*

July Anniversaries

7—Greta & Tyler Hall	19—Jill & Marty Keeney
7—Oliva Grugan & Will Robbins*1*	26—Kristina & Tim Launtz
13—Bob & Sue Lamey	31—Cheryl & Robert Ritchey
15—Joanne & Otto Krugh	



Grocery Gift Cards— Every card helps our church!

Do you ever buy groceries at Weis or Giant? Purchase a grocery gift card through Stone Church and you can shop as normal and Stone Church gets a donation of 5% back from the grocery store!

Grocery gift cards are available in denominations of \$25, \$50, and \$100. You can purchase these by contacting the church office; we'll be happy to get them to you.



Food Pantry Sunday—July 19

As we live with the stay-at-home order, we find creative ways to continue our ministries. Since we aren't meeting to collect your food item donations, we are instead accepting donations to purchase grocery cards to mail to the Huntingdon Food Pantry. Simply mail your checks to the church office or go to the donation page on our website and indicate in the memo line or note that funds are to be used for this purpose!

Stone Church of the Brethren
1623 Moore Street
Huntingdon, PA 16652
www.huntingdonstonechurch.org
814-643-3390 • stonechurch@verizon.net

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STONE CHURCH NEWS

July 2020



SUNDAYS

(via zoom!)

10:45AM – Worship

4:00PM – Children’s Gathering!

WEDNESDAYS

7:00PM – Bible Study

Stone Church COVID-19 update

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